

## FROM FIELD AND STUDY

***Egernia inornata*, an additional reptile record for the Shark Bay Region** — The herpetofauna of the Shark Bay region is extremely rich and diverse, with a total of 105 species and sub-species of reptiles and amphibians previously recorded (Storr and Harold 1978: *Rec. West. Aust. Mus.* 6(4): 449-467; 1980: *West. Aust. Nat.* 14(8): 240; Storr 1981: *Rec. West. Aust. Mus.* 9(3): 235-271; 1984: *Rec. West. Aust. Mus.* 11(2): 109-118; King and Roberts 1982: *West. Aust. Nat.* 15(2): 21-22.). One noticeable absence from the known herpetofauna of the mainland was a representative of the *Egernia whitii* species complex, widespread in sandy habitats, although an isolated population of *E. multiscutata* occurs on Bernier Island.

A single specimen of *Egernia inornata* (Australian Museum R105730) was pit-trapped on 10 February 1982, 17 km air distance SE of Nanga homestead, in 26°20'S 113°57'E. The specimen was collected on the crest of a high red sand dune in open *Acacia* scrub with sparse ground cover. Pianka and Giles (1982: *West. Aust. Nat.* 15(2): 8-12) noted that *E. inornata* showed a preference for the upper slopes and crests of dunes in the Great Victoria Desert.

The nearest records of *E. inornata* are from East Yuna Nature Reserve to the south-east (Dell and Chapman 1981: *Rec. West. Aust. Mus. Suppl.* (13): 95-102) and Merlinleigh to the north-east (Storr 1968: *J. Proc. Roy. Soc. West. Aust.* 51(2): 51-62), both over 250 km distant.

This record is the first *E. inornata* in a near coastal situation and extends the parapatric distributions of *E. inornata* and *E. multiscutata* shown by Storr (1978: *Rec. West. Aust. Mus.* 6(2): 147-187) to the Shark Bay region. The occurrence of *E. inornata* near the coast in this instance may be due to the close proximity of red sand dunes to the coast.

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**Brown Quail at Carnarvon** — On 19 September 1985 I heard the rising di-syllabic whistling calls of a Brown Quail *Coturnix australis* at McNeill Claypan (24°54' S, 113°45' E), near Carnarvon. The quail was concealed in dry rank grass growing amongst the trunks and low branches of a belt of eucalypts fringing the drying lagoon.

When subsequently flushed, the quail was identified by its large size, rather uniform dark brown coloration and noisy, laboured flight. Identification as Stubble Quail *C. novaezelandiae* was ruled out on these three points: the Stubble Quail has a tri-syllabic call which does not terminate with a strong upward inflection; the Stubble Quail is smaller and paler on its underparts; and the Stubble Quail has stronger flight with less noisy wingbeats.

The Brown Quail is not recorded in the Carnarvon district in 'The Atlas of Australian Birds' (Blakers *et al.* 1984), the nearest records being 500-700 km distant. Storr lists records of Brown Quail as close as the Onslow district in 'Birds of the Pilbara Region, Western Australia' (W.A. Museum, 1984), but does not mention any records of the Brown Quail for the Gascoyne Region (Rec. West. Aust. Mus. Supplement No. 21, 1985).

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